

## **MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM - WEEKLY REPORT**

**TO:** Interested Parties  
**FROM:** Ken McDonald, Wildlife Bureau Chief  
**SUBJECT:** Wolf Program Activities and Related Information  
**WEEK OF:** April 30-May 6, 2011

Contributors to the Montana Wolf Weekly are Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), Universities, USDA Wildlife Services (WS), the National Park Service (NPS; Glacier NP; Yellowstone National Park will be reported in the Wyoming Wolf Weekly), US Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Blackfeet Nation.

Highlighted activities relate to: monitoring, wolf-livestock interactions, outreach and education, research, law enforcement, and other miscellaneous topics of public interest. The Weekly Report will be available each Monday, covering the previous week. It and other wolf program information (including the 2009 annual report) can be found on the FWP website.

### **WOLF MONITORING ACTIVITIES:**

**5/1:** Ross conducted a monitoring flight in SW MT.

**5/4:** Laudon conducted a monitoring flight in Western MT.

**5/5:** Bradley conducted a monitoring flight in Western MT.

**5/5 & 5/6:** Lance conducted monitoring flights in SW MT.

**4/30:** FWP investigated and picked up a dead wolf in the Madison Valley, it is currently under investigation by the USFWS.

**5/5:** Smucker retrieved a 2 year old adult male wolf that had been killed by a vehicle on I-90 near Turah, east of Missoula.

**5/6:** Smucker trapped and collared the alpha male of the Welcome Creek pack in the Bitterroot Valley. Traps were pulled.

Bradley has been trapping for the Brooks Creek pack in the Bitterroot Valley. Traps were pulled for the weekend due to concerns of increased human activity in the area.

Game Warden Singleterry and Bradley investigated a mortality signal of a GPS collared wolf from Idaho that recently showed up near Superior in the lower Clark Fork. The wolf was found to be killed by other wolves.

## **WOLF-LIVESTOCK ACTIVITIES:**

**5/2:** WS confirmed that wolves killed one ewe and injured another on private land near Canyon Creek. The producer saw two wolves, it is unknown if they are associated with a local pack or if it is new activity. WS has been authorized to collar and release one wolf and kill one wolf. Traps were placed in the area.

**5/6:** WS investigated a dead calf discovered on private land around Bracket Creek, Shields Valley. The cause of death was determined to be a probable wolf kill. The producer reports seeing regular wolf activity in the area, and there was a pup found dead on the road close to this location in fall 2010. WS was authorized to capture one wolf for collaring. FWP will continue learning more about wolves here.

**5/6:** A shoot on site permit and WS control actions in the Blacktail south of Dillon have been extended through May 27 due to continued wolf activity.

## **OUTREACH AND EDUCATION:**

**5/2-3:** Smucker and Bradley taught a wolf course as part of hunter education. About 40 students participated each night.

**RESEARCH ACTIVITIES:** Nothing to report.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT AND RELATED ACTIVITIES:** Nothing to report.

## **OTHER UPDATES:**

**Litigation:** Wolves in the NRM DPS, except in Wyoming, were delisted on May 5, 2011- The recent federal legislation required that the 2009 NRM wolf delisting rule be re-published in the Federal Register. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2009 science-based delisting rule was available for public review and comment for nearly 5 months. Nearly 520,000 public comments were received and analyzed before it was finalized. It was also reviewed by 8 of the top wolf experts in North America who determined it was scientifically sound. The 2009 delisting rule was re-published in the Federal Register and became effective on May 5, 2011. The NRM wolf population is biologically recovered and will remain so under state and tribal management in Montana, Idaho, eastern Washington and Oregon, and a small part of north central Utah. Wolves in Wyoming remain listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). You can refresh your memory of that rule at <http://westerngraywolf.fws.gov>. Sound science was appropriately used. Now that wolves are delisted, they will be managed under state and tribal laws in a manner similar to mountain lions, black bears, elk and deer and other types of resident wildlife. The states and tribes where wolves were delisted will do a great job for both wolf conservation and to meet the needs of people. The Service has been asked what this means to other federal, state, and tribal cooperators. Answer is very simple. Wolves are now protected by state and tribal laws instead of the ESA throughout the NRM DPS except in Wyoming where wolves remain

federally protected. After the Service can approve a wolf management plan in Wyoming and after the normal regulatory process is completed, then wolves there could be delisted. Wolves were delisted under this exact same rule from May 2009 until August 2010, so state and tribal partners have had over a year of experience managing issues, coordinating wolf management and research throughout the NRM DPS, the best way to fine-tune management, and other on-the-ground issues, so some patience, understanding, and cooperation by the public will still be needed. The Service will be working with partners at each step along the way as this transition unfolds. Wolf restoration has been an amazing biological success story and delisting represents the culmination the efforts of a host of partners.

**Fall hunting:** The MFWP Commission will consider tentative fall wolf hunting season regulations at the May 12 meeting.

To learn more about Montana's wolf population, the Montana program and to help FWP monitor wolves by reporting wolf sign, visit FWP online. Use the following shortcut link and be sure to update your bookmarks: <http://fwp.mt.gov/wolf>

To anonymously report a dead or injured wolf or suspected illegal activity, call: 1-800-TIP-MONT or 1-800-847-6668.

To request an investigation of injured or dead livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services directly in western Montana / Helena area at 406-458-0106 or in eastern Montana at the statewide office at 406-657-6464. Or, call your nearest FWP representative to have your call referred to Wildlife Services.

If you have a confirmed or probable livestock death loss due to wolves, USDA Wildlife Services will supply you with a copy of the Loss Reimbursement Application form. For more information, see <http://liv.mt.gov/liv/LM/index.asp> Or, contact the Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program Coordinator, George Edwards at the Montana Department of Livestock at 406-444-5609.